ED 423 226 PROMOTING REFLECTIVE PRACTICES IN PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS: CHOOSING THREE PORTFOLIO GOALS.

1 OF 1

MCFARLAND, KATHERINE P.

98 8P.

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 423 226 SP 038 149

AUTHOR McFarland, Katherine P.
TITLE Promoting Reflective Practices in Pre-Service Teachers: Choosing Three Portfolio Goals.
PUB DATE 1998-09-01
NOTE 8p.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom (055) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Elementary Secondary Education; Evaluation Methods; Higher Education; *Portfolio Assessment; Preservice Teacher Education; *Reflective Teaching; *Student Evaluation; *Student Teachers; Success
IDENTIFIERS *Reflective Thinking

ABSTRACT

Portfolio assessment is valuable for promoting reflective practice in student teachers. This paper describes how a university supervisor required her student teachers to select three professional goals at the beginning of their practicum and provide the proof that they achieved them by the end of the semester. The supervisor began by showing the student teachers her own first portfolio with its three goals. She explained the activity to the students using a handout. Student teachers were expected to select three goals that had personal meaning; make sure that the goals could be proven at the end of the semester; provide evidence of how they met each goal through artifacts such as notes, articles, handouts, dialogue, and observation; and write one page per goal of how each goal was met. The supervisor found that her student teachers used portfolios for many purposes, including identifying weaknesses and plans for growth and improvement; focusing on content; encouraging reflection of promising practices; solving problems; and reconstructing knowledge of the process of growth and learning. This paper provides examples of students' goals and responses to the activity. (SM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 423 226

Promoting Reflective Practices in Pre-Service Teachers: Choosing Three Portfolio Goals

September 1, 1998

Katherine P. McFarland, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of English
Shippensburg University
Shippensburg, PA 17257
kpmcfa@ark.ship.edu

CS 238149

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

K. McFarland

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Promoting Reflective Practices in Pre-Service Teachers: Choosing Three Portfolio Goals

Katherine P. McFarland, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of English
Shippensburg University

Purpose : Although portfolios mean different things to different people in educational settings, generally they are used as a means of authentic, ongoing-assessment. Such authentic assessment stimulates thinking and allows for individuals to reflect on their work, evaluate their progress, and maintain ownership over their own learning. Portfolios provide a dynamic process by which participants take an active role in their learning and assessment versus a passive role of allowing assessment to be placed in the hands of others.

Portfolio assessment is particularly valuable for student teachers to promote reflective practice. During the 1995-96 semesters, as a university supervisor, I required that student teachers select three goals in the beginning of their practicum and provide the proof of achieving their goals by the end of the semester. I found that student teachers used the portfolio for many different purposes: to identify weaknesses and plan for growth and improvement, to focus on content, to encourage reflection of promising practices, to solve a problem, and to reconstruct knowledge of the process of growth and learning.

As an example, I explained and showed my student teachers my own first portfolio -- consisting of three goals-- that I started three years ago as a seasoned 18 year educator. My main goal was to learn as much

about reading-across-the-curriculum as I knew about writing. To obtain my goal, I attended several inservice training, read articles, reacted to several popular books, and engaged in many dialogues with reading professionals. For this goal, I provided the artifacts (handouts, articles, notes, and reactions) in the designated section of my three ring notebook, as proof I was progressing towards that goal. At the end of the year, I summarized what I did.

Intended Audience: This activity was created for student teachers.

Materials: Three-Ring Notebook

Time Needed: One semester

Procedures: I explained the activity in a handout on the Requirements for Student Teaching that student teachers received on the first day we met.

> The Portfolio will consist of three professional goals that you have for the semester. These goals need to be discussed with your cooperating teacher and placed in the first section of your notebook within the first two weeks. Evidence of reaching these goals must be provided by the end of the semester. You will be required to write (one page per goal) on how you reached your goal and to provide evidence (notes, articles, handouts, dialogue, and observations) of meeting each goal. Examples of professional goals may be: to collect information on classroom management in order to decide on a personal management style, to learn more on cooperative learning for use in the classroom, or to gain more knowledge

of a multicultural curriculum in your content area. Evaluation will be based on evidence of meeting all three goals with a "Satisfactory" or "Not Satisfactory" criteria. Examples of completed portfolios will be provided for you in advance.

Models: Several of the following goals have been taken from the portfolios of student teachers to show the variety of responses to this activity. The first example involves a business major who was assigned a computer lab for her practicum without a strong background in computer management. The excerpt identifies her need to improve and documents her growth:

> One goal I had for this semester was to become more 'computer literate.' My certification is in Business Administration, which deals with Accounting, Business Law, Personal Finance, and the like. Computer classes fall under the category of General Business. Though I will soon take the ExCet [state test] for this area, it is not included in my initial certification package. Therefore, when I "took over" Mrs. Jone's classes, I took over Micro Computer Applications also. This was a tremendous learning experience for me. The software they were using posed no problem to me -- that was never much of a concern. The concern came when the students would come to me with problems about the computer itself or the printer or the disks. . . Throughout the semester, Mrs. Jones showed me numerous things about the computer. I decide to keep a checklist of things I achieved and / or things I wanted to achieve. I did in fact accomplish everything on the list, but I know there is

much more to be learned. This knowledge, however, gave me a good foundation from which to begin. I now feel comfortable when Mrs. Jones leaves for several days because I know I can solve most of the problems that arise in the classroom. This, by far, I consider to be one my biggest accomplishments this semester. The following I accomplished this semester:

Load paper in printer / prepare for printing	Install software
Assess possible problems with printers	Trouble Shoot GPF
Copy / erase files on hard drive	Format Disks
Use Laserdisk Player	Scandisk / Defrag
Software: Micro Soft Works Data Base	MicroGrade
Accounting Educational Software	Quattro Pro

A second example involved learning about inclusion in secondary schools. The student teacher focused on how to modify, and documented her goal with many handouts and articles in which she highlighted important information. She writes:

> Before this semester of student teaching, I had a very limited understanding of inclusion in the secondary schools. I had always envisioned inclusion as being quite obvious, and requiring large, difficult amounts of work and patience. What I have discovered however is that most inclusion in classrooms neither looks nor functions any differently than any other classroom on the surface. I had to experience it first hand to understand how to create a successful inclusion environment . . .

I know I have more to learn on this subject, but I think I built a solid foundation this semester. First, I learned a lot from simply talking to and observing several teachers who have successfully included special education students in their content area classroom. (See observations.) Second, I really enjoyed our seminar on inclusion. I picked up a lot of handouts and tips. (See enclosed handouts.) Third, most of my learning, however, came from actual, hands-on experience. I had four special education students in my classes. I had to learn quickly about the required modifications. Learning about modifications helped me to see how different students need different approaches. These students need to feel that they can be successful, but they cannot do this when the assignment creates unbearable confusion in their brains. I have learned that it is important to try to understand how the student views the lessons in order to successfully modify the lessons. Specifically, I learned to modify assignments and tests. (See enclosed examples.) Finally, I will continue to learn specific inclusion techniques to create a successful environment for all students.

Expected Outcomes:

Student teachers were expected to:

1.) Choose three professional goals for the semester that have personal meaning.

2.) Make sure that professional goals can be proven by the end of the semester.

3.) Provide evidence of how they met each goal through artifacts such as collected notes, articles, handouts, dialogue, and observations.

4.) Write one page per goal of how each goal was met.

Adaptations for Other Audiences: Portfolios could be used for professional interns, teachers, teacher educators, and school / university personnel.

For Further Information:

Biddle, J.R. & Lasley, T.J. (1991). Portfolios and the process of teacher education. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago.

Seldin, P. (1991). The teaching portfolio: A practical guide to improved performance and promotion/tenure decisions. Boston: Anker Publishing Co.

Smyser, S. O. & Green, J. E. (1993). Teaching portfolios: Applications for teacher education. Paper present to Association of Teacher Educators, Los Angeles.